



2024  
European Parliament Elections

**Humane Society  
International/Europe  
Manifesto**



**HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL**  
EUROPE



In June 2024, citizens from across 27 EU Member States will elect a new European Parliament. The 720 MEPs chosen by the electorate will be charged with the responsibility of representing EU citizens' interests for the next five years and shaping the future of EU policy and legislation.

The protection of animals is an issue close to the hearts of many EU citizens. This is also reflected in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which explicitly recognises that animals are sentient beings and that the EU and Member States must pay full regard to their welfare requirements in their policymaking.

It is often said that the EU has the highest animal welfare standards in the world, but there is still enormous room for improvement. The farm animal welfare legislation is incomplete and urgently needs updating, not only to expand its scope, but also to reflect current scientific understandings of the complex welfare needs of the animals that we keep for production purposes. Additionally, there is a need to recognise the impact of animal agriculture on climate change and the necessity of transitioning to more sustainable, plant-based diets.

The protection of wildlife is also an important political issue. Europe is both a destination market for wildlife products, both legal and illegal, and a hub for the trafficking of wildlife in transit to other regions. There are also significant loopholes in the existing EU wildlife trade Regulations that need closing. Regrettably, the EU is also the second biggest importer in the world of hunting trophies from threatened and endangered species.

Animals used for scientific purposes also need more attention in the EU. Millions of animals in laboratories suffer and die each year in EU-funded research, and for testing mandated by EU regulations. Even our celebrated ban on animal testing of cosmetics is being undermined. It is time for EU institutions to articulate an ambitious and concrete plan for phasing-in modern animal-free approaches, and ensure that our laws, regulations, and research funding programmes operate in lockstep with this plan.

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***Humane Society International/Europe is calling on candidates for the European Elections to become advocates for farmed, wild and laboratory animals to advance their welfare and improve their protection in the EU and beyond. This Manifesto outlines a number of key priorities for the upcoming Tenth Parliamentary Term (2024-2029).***

# Advancing Farm animal welfare

*In 2020, the European Commission's EU Farm to Fork Strategy committed to revising and expanding the scope of existing EU animal welfare legislation to reflect current scientific knowledge. Following the successful European Citizens' Initiative to End the Cage Age, the Commission also pledged to end caged confinement for farm animals. Regrettably, the Commission has failed to deliver the proposals to improve the welfare of animals on farms promised by the end of 2023, adopting only a weak legislative proposal on animal transport. It is vital that the animal transport proposal is strengthened by the new Parliament. Moreover, MEPs must push the Commission to make good on its promises and deliver legislation to advance farm animal welfare during the next Parliamentary term. Some of HSI's key demands for the improvement of the welfare of pigs and poultry are summarised below.*

## PIG WELFARE

Council Directive 2008/120/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs is no longer fit for purpose and fails to adequately provide for the welfare needs of the species.

It is crucial that pig production becomes more animal than economically focused.

This will inter alia necessarily require an end to intensive confinement with no cages or individual sow stalls (and preferably outdoor access) and the selection of pigs for robustness, including traits, such as lower prolificacy, good mothering ability and low aggression.

It is also vital for the new welfare rules to mandate the provision of spacious pig housing that offers variation with straw bedding and functional areas for resting and other activities, such as foraging and rooting, eating and drinking. There should be enough space so that resting and eating are separated from dunging areas.

Lastly, the integrity of the species must be respected by, ideally, keeping pigs in family group systems, aligning litter size with sow suckling capacity and prohibiting surgical mutilations. It is noted that routine tail-docking is already prohibited, but the practice continues unabated in all Member States, except for Sweden and Finland, which have achieved this by properly implementing the Pigs Directive provisions concerning environmental enrichment.



## WELFARE OF LAYING HENS

While Council Directive 1999/74/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens prohibited the use of non-enriched battery cages, it still permits enriched cages, which completely fail to meet the welfare requirements for laying hens.

More than half of egg production in the EU is already cage-free, but legislative action at EU level is needed to ensure that all laying hens are kept in alternative systems in all Member States. It is vital that all laying hens are provided a safe, comfortable and hygienic housing environment with space for each bird to move freely with plenty of friable litter, elevated perching space for all birds, appropriate nest boxes and a variety of environmental enrichments to meet their behavioural needs.

Additionally, laying hens require a comfortable house housing environment with effective ventilation, suitable temperature and acceptable air quality. Nutritional requirements should meet dietary energy needs of active cage-free birds with higher protein content to prevent development of abnormal feather pecking behaviour. Free-range production systems must provide safe access to a well-maintained pasture or range area with protection from predators and the elements, and good drainage.

## WELFARE OF MEAT CHICKENS

Council Directive 2007/43/EC laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production is not fit for purpose. Conventional broiler chicken production causes an array of serious animal welfare problems, including crowded, barren living conditions, painful procedures, and physical and physiological problems associated with rapid growth.

It is vital that slower-growing breeds demonstrating higher welfare outcomes are adopted. Commercially viable genetic strains with higher welfare outcomes are readily available. Preferably, dual-purpose, heritage, local or traditional breeds that are adapted to local conditions, and have no more than 30g/day growth would be raised instead.

To address issue of overcrowding, which reduces the ability of birds to express their natural behaviour and to avoid social interactions, the stocking density should be set at no more than 30kg/m<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, thinning flocks should ideally not be practised, since it is stressful and poses a risk factor for campylobacter and other infections. Surgical mutilations, such as beak trimming, de-toeing and de-clawing and comb dubbing, and caponisation must also be prohibited.

With respect to environmental enrichment, elevated perches and at least two kinds of pecking substrates must be provided. Birds with outdoor access require shade, shelter and protection from predators. Further, to ensure air quality in closed systems it is crucial to limit the concentrations of both ammonia and carbon dioxide, and to mandate the installation of generators, backup and alarm systems for ventilation and temperature control when the animals' lives are dependent on the capacity of fans to move air. Likewise, a minimum of 50 lux of light, as well as natural light via inclusion of window space should be provided for birds kept in closed housing systems and a minimum of 6 hours, but preferably 8 hours, of darkness to allow the birds to properly sleep. Semi or full outdoor access for broiler chickens is preferable.

## REVISION OF DIRECTIVE 98/58/EC – REPLACEMENT WITH A 'KEPT ANIMALS' REGULATION

Council Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes sets down general rules concerning the protection of animals farmed for food, wool, skin or fur, or for other farming purposes, including fish, reptiles and amphibians.

Broadly speaking, it deals with issues relating to the freedom of movement and avoidance of unnecessary suffering and injury, provision of appropriate nutrition, basic housing conditions (i.e. lighting, ventilation and temperature), as well as requirements concerning staffing, inspections and record-keeping. Member States can also keep or introduce stricter provisions.

The Directive's provisions are highly generalised and insufficient to guarantee that the complex welfare needs of all species kept for food production are met. Species-specific rules are needed to protect the welfare of other food-producing species, such as dairy cows, beef cattle, ducks, geese, turkeys, quails, rabbits and farmed fish. It is recognised that some of these additional minimum welfare standards will necessarily be adopted through the comitology process in the form of delegated acts. The Directive should also be transposed into a Regulation for 'kept animals', which is binding in its entirety on all Member States.

The concept of the five freedoms on which Directive 98/58/EC is based is outdated and should be replaced with the 'five domains' model that encompasses nutrition, environment, health, behaviour and mental state, and makes a distinction between the physical and functional factors affecting an animal's welfare and the overall mental state of the animal, which stems from these factors. This approach acknowledges that an animal's emotional needs are equally important as their physical needs.



## Making Fur History

*There are serious ethical and animal welfare concerns associated with the production of fur. The living conditions in fur farms, which keep animals, such as American mink, foxes and raccoon dogs, in close proximity and at high densities, fail to satisfy many of the animals' most basic welfare needs. The practice of fur farming is outdated and inherently inhumane. Fur farming also poses a threat to native biodiversity and, as has been evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, also an unacceptable risk to public health. The EU labelling regime for fur products is also inadequate. This must be improved for consumers to be able to make more informed choices and not be duped into purchasing real animal fur assuming that it is fake.*

### BAN FUR FARMING

Fur farming has already been prohibited and/or is in the process of being phased-out in 15 EU Member States, namely Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Malta. Furthermore, the recent European Citizens' Initiative Fur Free Europe demonstrates the breadth of citizen support across the Union for a full EU ban on fur farming. The revision of the EU animal welfare

legislation provides an opportunity to prohibit the cruel and unnecessary practice of fur farming in the EU.

HSI urges the adoption of an EU-wide ban on the keeping, breeding and killing of animals for the sole purpose of fur production.

### FUR LABELLING

Article 12 of the Textile Regulation (EU) No 1007/2011 established a labelling requirement for 'textile products containing non-textile parts of animal origin'. This provision is inadequate and fails to allow consumers to make an informed decision with respect to real animal fur given that it is unclear and only covers textile products that fall under the scope of the legislation.

The revision of the EU Textile Regulation provides an opportunity to address these deficits by ensuring the mandatory and meaningful labelling of all items containing real animal fur, for as long as the sale thereof remains legal. This should ideally require the inclusion of product information detailing: 1) the species from which the fur derives, 2) the country of origin and 3) how the animal was reared and killed.

# Protecting Wildlife

*The European Commission's EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 is a binding political commitment to protecting and restoring biodiversity. A key driver of global biodiversity loss is the direct exploitation of wildlife by humans. The trade in wildlife plays a key role in this. HSI, therefore, welcomes the revised EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking and plans to intensify the fight against the illegal wildlife trade, but notes that legal trade in wild animals and wildlife products also significantly contributes to biodiversity decline and should not be overlooked. Moreover, there are also significant concerns about the welfare of wild animals either being caught or raised and killed for their parts and products, or traded live.*

## TROPHY HUNTING

Trophy hunting is one of the most egregious forms of wildlife exploitation. Continuing to permit the EU import and export of such hunting trophies is inconsistent with the EU's goal of protecting biodiversity worldwide. HSI calls for a ban on trophy hunting imports of threatened and endangered species.

It is still possible for hunters to legally import hunting trophies of CITES-listed species to the EU with an import permit issued by a Member State. Only species listed on Annex A of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation and twelve additional species listed





in Annex B, namely African elephants, southern white rhinos, common hippopotamus, seven species of argali sheep, African lions, and polar bears, are subject to this permitting regime. This means that the EU is currently not even in a position to ascertain whether most trophy imports are non-detrimental to the conservation of species and legal at the point of origin.

For as long as importing hunting trophies is still legal, HSI believes that the requirement for import permits should be extended to ALL species listed in Annex B of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations to ensure that these trophies are of legal and 'sustainable' origin. It is also crucial that Member States only issue permits when there is reliable, verifiable evidence available that all requirements detailed in the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations are met. For Annex A species, this also means that evidence for the provision of significant and tangible conservation benefits for the species concerned must also be provided. Lastly, much greater transparency as to how opinions of the Scientific Review Group on country-species trophy imports are reached, is a necessary first step for this approach.

## CLOSING THE LOOPHOLES IN EU WILDLIFE TRADE REGULATIONS

HSI strongly advocates an end the trade in live wild animals for the exotic pet trade and other commercial purposes. Many threatened species are protected from exploitation in their home countries, but are not protected from being traded, either through domestic legislation or by CITES. As a result, wildlife traffickers are able to easily smuggle these animals into legal

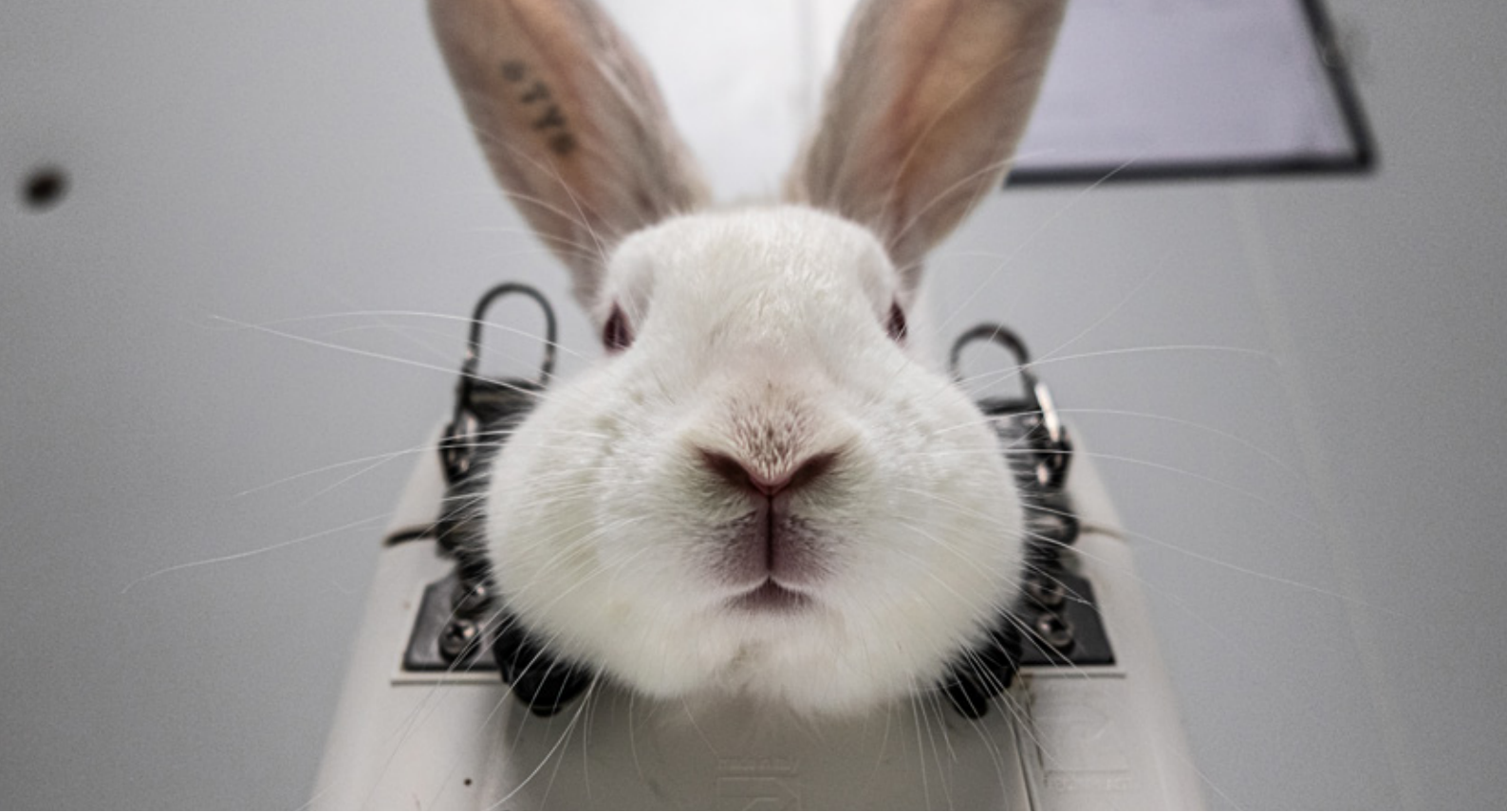
(or illegal) international trade flows, and once out of their countries of origin, little can be done to stop the trade in these species, particularly as exotic pets.

To address this devastating practice, it is imperative that the EU commits to adopting legislation that prohibits the importation, transshipment, purchase, and sale of wildlife taken illegally in the country of harvest/origin.

## ACHIEVING COEXISTENCE WITH LARGE CARNIVORES

The continued recovery of native wildlife species, including European populations of wolves, bears and lynx, is important for the preservation of EU biodiversity. The destruction of habitat and encroachment of human activities can increase the risk of human-large carnivore conflict and subsequently the increased vilification and persecution of these species, particularly in rural areas.

It is vital that the existing nature legislation is not weakened. In recent years, there has been persistent pressure from a few Member States and the hunting and farming lobbies to revise the Habitats Directive to permit more large carnivores to be killed. HSI instead advocates the rigorous pursuit of mitigation strategies to prevent predation, which may be fully remunerated under State Aid rules, to achieve greater coexistence with large carnivores and the implementation of existing measures by Member States to promptly compensate farmers for their losses in the event of predator attacks.



## Animal-Free Science

*“Animal models are wrong more often than they are right,” according to Harvard professor Dr Don Ingber, while modern non-animal technologies are increasingly able to mimic or predict human organ/system-level functions and have the potential to revolutionise health research and safety science. In 2021, the European Parliament issued a near-unanimous call for an Action Plan to phase animals out of European science. The coming years will be critical for creating a coherent EU policy framework for change, and for working together to agree and progress a shared roadmap to accelerate phasing-in non-animal approaches based on modern science while phasing-out last century’s animal models for testing and research.*

### REACH, CLP & CHEMICALS STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The European Commission has committed to develop a roadmap to replace animal testing for chemicals; however, its recent actions and proposals are setting the stage for increased animal use. It is vital that no new or expanded animal testing requirements are allowed to be introduced via revisions to EU regulations for chemicals (REACH) and classification, labelling and packaging (CLP) or delegated acts, that obsolete processes that favour “tick-box” animal testing be replaced by risk-based prioritisation and modern approaches to testing and assessment that take account of the latest scientific developments, and that major policy decisions (e.g. creation of new hazard categories

under CLP) be subject to full review and debate by the European Parliament and Council, and not circumvented by the Commission by means of Delegated Acts.

### HUMANISING HEALTH RESEARCH

Human health and basic research are the main consumers of animals in European laboratories, and the main driver for this use of animals is funding. Thus, to achieve the EU’s stated goal of replacing animals in science, there needs to be a strategic and sustained shift in EU and Member State funding away from projects that involve animals and towards those that do not. The Parliament’s 2021 resolution called for “mechanisms for preferential funding of non-animal methods across all EU research” and “reduction targets and timelines ... to incentivise change”.

HSI recommends the implementation of such a mechanism based on sound scientific criteria, allowing both a reduction of animal use and increased funding in technologies with a higher potential for research and drug development. As a first step, the amount of EU funding going to animal and non-animal research should be assessed and tracked accurately. Efforts should also be undertaken to identify animal models least able to replicate human biology and shift funding from those to more promising tools (organs-on-chips, computer models, etc.). This would be a win-win-win for people, animals, and science.



# Transitioning to Plant-Based Diets

*The Commission's EU Farm to Fork Strategy acknowledged that a transition to a more sustainable food system will not happen without a shift in people's diets. The Strategy rightly states that "moving to a more plant-based diet with less red and processed meat and with more fruits and vegetables will reduce not only risks of life-threatening diseases, but also the environmental impact of the food system." Likewise, the Europe Beating Cancer Plan also recognises the necessity of reducing the consumption of animal products and shifting to more plant-based diets.*

## SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK LAW

The Commission's proposed Sustainable Food Systems Framework Law aims to make the EU food system sustainable and to integrate sustainability into all food-related policies and achieve policy coherence. It is vital that this legislation pays full regard to the welfare of farm animals, given that this is integral to food sustainability.

HSI recommends that this legislation includes measures to reduce farm animal numbers and stocking densities. There must also be a shift from intensive animal agriculture to an increase





in the production and consumption of plant-based products. Growing plant proteins for animal feed is an inefficient use of resources given the amount needed thereof to produce a unit of meat. Rather than feeding plant-proteins to farm animals, such crops could more efficiently be used to feed people.

## AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT PROMOTION POLICY

Given the urgent need to transition to more sustainable food systems, it is vital to ensure that EU funds are no longer used for the promotion of animal products derived from intensive animal production systems. Although it is preferable for no meat or other animal products to be promoted at all, if the Commission wishes to achieve its Farm to Fork objective of ensuring that at least 25% of EU's agricultural land is under organic farming by 2030, then earmarking such funds to exclusively promote animal products produced within organic systems with higher animal welfare standards would be advisable. This may also provide an incentive for producers to transition to extensive animal production systems that employ higher animal welfare.

## EU SCHOOL SCHEME

The EU School Scheme is up for revision and should ideally be limited to fruit and vegetables, and no longer promote cow's milk given the significant environmental impact of dairy production. At the very minimum, pupils should be offered the alternatives of

plant-based milk products. This is important not only to support the transition to more sustainable food systems, but to also ensure that the EU School Scheme is fully inclusive and provides alternatives for children who cannot or do not want to consume cows' milk.

## EU CLIMATE POLICY

Agriculture is responsible for 10.3% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 70% of those are from the animal sector. Yet, animal agriculture continues to be the 'cow in the room' when it comes to EU climate policy, despite the urgent need to reduce methane and nitrous oxide emissions, as well as CO<sub>2</sub>. It is vital to reduce the number of animals kept on farms in the EU. At present, there is too great an emphasis on reducing the environmental and climate impact of animal production through post-production technologies. This focus shifts attention away from needed policy measures and behavioural change, precluding the reduction of environmental impacts by addressing the overproduction and overconsumption of animal products—areas where cuts in emissions can be the most impactful, lasting and readily achieved.

Innovation should not be viewed as a panacea to mitigate the impact of large-scale intensive animal agriculture. Precision Livestock Farming risks facilitating intensive production systems that are inherently designed to overproduce. Likewise, using innovative feed additives may help to reduce enteric methane emissions from farm animals, such as cattle, but these solutions serve to maintain the status quo, rather than engender the systemic change needed in our food system and diets.

# International Trade Policy

*Trade agreements, if drafted appropriately and allocated necessary resources, can offer a platform to influence positive change for the lives of animals. It is, therefore, vital that there is a high level of ambition for any trade deals negotiated between the EU and other nations. These must include strong provisions to ensure the protection of all animals that may be affected by trade, whether they may be on the farm, in laboratories or in the wild. This also means that animal welfare should be a consideration – where relevant – across the whole agreement and should not be overlooked in the parties’ desire to remove trade barriers and increase trade flows.*

## FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

Trade policy can be used as an instrument to obtain ambitious commitments from third countries on animal welfare. Given

that Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between the EU and other countries are likely to further increase trade opportunities for animal agricultural products, including meat, egg and dairy products, it is important to ensure that all new EU trade agreements embrace the principle of ‘conditional liberalisation’ of the market by ensuring that these agreements include provisions requiring that animal products must satisfy minimum EU animal welfare standards to be able to enter the EU market duty-free. The provisions for shelled eggs in the provisionally agreed EU-Mercosur trade deal and beef from grass-fed cattle in the EU-New Zealand FTA have established precedents for this.

Additionally, trade policy can also provide a formalised framework for international and regulatory cooperation on animal welfare with the EU providing, for instance, technical assistance, expertise and capacity-building in order to raise animal welfare standards and improve the sustainability of food production elsewhere in the world.





## SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

The most recent FTAs under negotiation have included proposals by the EU for chapters on Sustainable Food Systems. A sustainable food system must deliver food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised. Moreover, it should also not compromise the welfare of animals that are kept for food production. The environmental impact of food production, particularly intensive animal agriculture, is of concern, not only with regard to climate change, but also to issues such as environmental degradation, pollution and biodiversity decline. This issue must be properly addressed in future EU FTAs.

## TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

While FTAs open markets, create business and employment opportunities, and can increase economic growth, new increased access to markets can also pose a threat to biodiversity and habitats, and lead to increases in legal and illegal trade in wildlife. HSI welcomes the inclusion of robust provisions relating to biodiversity protection and enhanced cooperation in the Trade and Sustainable Development chapters of recent FTAs, including those with Vietnam and New Zealand, particularly regarding issues, such as wildlife trafficking and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

This level of ambition with regards to biodiversity protection must be maintained in all future trade agreements. In this regard, EU FTAs, such as the one presently being negotiated with Indonesia, must include commitments to take steps to discourage the consumption of certain goods and products, such as palm oil, which are unsustainably harvested thereby posing a threat to native wildlife and habitats.

# Humane Society International/Europe's key priorities for the 2024 European Elections

*Humane Society International/Europe calls on candidates for the 2024 European Elections to become advocates for farmed, wild and laboratory animals. Here are a few of our key priorities for advancing animal welfare and improving animal protection in the EU and beyond.*



## Improving farm animal welfare

The existing body of EU animal welfare legislation must be revised to fully reflect current scientific understandings of animal welfare and its scope expanded to cover all animals kept for economic purposes. It is imperative that this legislative revision includes the phasing-out of all caged confinement for farm animals, such as laying hens and pigs.



## Making fur farming history

A full ban on the keeping, breeding and killing of animals for the sole purpose of fur production must be introduced. The cruel and unnecessary practice of fur farming must be relegated to the annals of history everywhere in Europe.



## Restricting hunting trophy imports

EU Member States are currently only required to issue import permits for hunting trophies from species listed on Annex A and just twelve species on Annex B of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations. For as long as the import of hunting trophies remains legal, this import requirement must be extended to ALL species listed in Annex B to ensure that these hunting trophies are of legal and 'sustainable' origin.



## Closing the loopholes in the EU wildlife trade Regulations

A loophole in EU legislation allows nationally protected wild animal species, trafficked into international trade flows, to be sold legally in Europe as exotic pets. The EU must commit to adopting supplementary legislation that prohibits the importation, transshipment, purchase, and sale of wildlife taken illegally in the country of harvest/origin.



## Ensuring animal-free science

The EU chemicals legislation (REACH) must be revised to close loopholes that allow testing of cosmetic ingredients. Both REACH and the regulation for chemicals classification, labelling, and packaging (CLP) must be updated to maximise adoption non-animal methods for safety assessment and it is crucial that no new or expanded animal testing requirements are introduced via revisions or delegated acts. In research, where the largest number of animals are used in experiments, the EU should commit to a scientific and technological shift towards non-animal approaches.



## Promoting sustainable food systems

EU policymaking, including any future Sustainable Food Systems Framework Law, should actively promote the transition to a more plant-based diet and a decrease in the production and consumption of animal products, as well as introducing measures to reduce the number of farmed animals in production and their stocking densities, to mitigate the environmental and climate impacts of intensive animal agriculture

# Our mission

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*Advancing the welfare of animals in more than 50 countries, Humane Society International works around the globe to promote the human-animal bond, rescue and protect dogs and cats, improve farm animal welfare, protect wildlife, promote animal-free testing and research, respond to disasters and confront cruelty to animals in all of its forms.*



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